

Promising Practice: Just-In-Time Training Full Employment Council

The Full Employment Council (FEC) is a business-led, private nonprofit organization that provides skills training and employment services to the unemployed and underemployed residents of the Greater Kansas City area. Through the 21st Century Healthcare Works HPOG program, FEC provides healthcare training to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients and low-income individuals. The program is focused on using real-time information from local employers, in concert with labor market information, to help participants make informed choices about their chosen training program.

FEC calls its training strategy the Just-In-Time approach, referring to how the training is customized to meet an employer's immediate workforce need. The approach recognizes that due to expansion or technology changes, employers can have sudden, immediate job openings for workers with the right skills and preparation. FEC guides participants into appropriate workplace skills and occupational training programs, so graduates are positioned just in time to fill these openings. Just-In-Time training is also customized to meet the needs of the job seeker in several ways.

FEC uses labor market information and real-time workforce intelligence from local employers to determine the most appropriate training course to enroll clients in or develop. The program uses a training menu that covers a wide variety of healthcare occupations by utilizing all local community colleges, vocational schools, and 4-year institutions. The training menu uses an industry panel to determine the training course most likely to meet the real time job openings. Programs on the menu have lengths ranging from 6 weeks to 24 months and lead to a variety of credentials. The strategy is designed to be as market sensitive as possible to ensure high rates of successful job placements.

The Just-In-Time approach is also designed to meet the needs of students. Counselors work with students to create plans that balance the student's goals with the realities of the job market. FEC's approach employs stackable credentials systems when appropriate. For example, when employer input showed a need for Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) with specializations in mental health and dementia care, the program developed CNA Plus programs, which include training for the CNA certificate, Medication Aide Level I, CPR and Basic Life Support (BLS), and Insulin Injection. The CNA Plus program also contains career readiness modules, including workplace readiness, computer skills, resume preparation, interviewing preparation, and financial literacy.

FEC's approach recognizes that each participant's situation is unique. FEC only recommends that students seek additional credentials when it is appropriate for the individual. Some students can be intimidated by the length of certain programs. Many participants want to be employed immediately. For some occupations, students can be discouraged when they learn that entry-level wages are lower than expected. The program addresses these challenges by helping participants find some form of employment immediately and providing support with

mentors. Career ladders are used to demonstrate the value of taking the first step in a healthcare career and to reinforce the likelihood of long-term wage gains. The program uses certificates or other recognition to mark steps and milestones in students' lives and congratulate participants on their successes.

Program staff continue to work with students during the placement transition. FEC provides biweekly monitoring onsite at the employer's location to mitigate any issues that may arise during the employment training period. Counselors conduct monthly follow up to assess the participant's need for supportive services during the first few weeks of employment. Once the participant has completed training, follow up is provided at 30-, 60-, 90-, and 120-day intervals to monitor retention.

FEC has found that this market-sensitive, customized training approach results in at least a 30 percent success differential, when compared with the completion rates for training courses that do not utilize workforce intelligence. FEC will continue using the Just-In-Time training approach, combined with a diverse training menu through varied educational institutions. Just-In-Time's diverse training intensity maximizes job placement success while meeting the workforce needs of local employers.